

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PC-01 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 MMO-01 A-01 AID-05 /056 W

-----088364 130659Z /16

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9954

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 7298

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, AF

SUBJ: PEACE CORPS: RESPONDING TO INITIAL AFGHAN GOVT REQUESTS
FOR VOLUNTEERS

REF: A) KABUL 5981, B) KABUL 6723

1. SUMMARY: THIS IS TO REQUEST A POSITIVE RESPONSE BY PEACE CORPS
HEADQUARTERS TO THE AFGHAN GOVT'S FIRST REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS.
END SUMMARY

2. WHEN THIS NEW LEFTIST GOVT TOOK POWER IN APRIL, WE CONSIDERED
PEACE CORPS TO BE AMONG THOSE USG PROGRAMS MOST VULNERABLE TO
AFGHAN GOVT TERMINATION. SO FAR, THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED. WHILE PEACE
CORPS LEVELS HAVE DROPPED 40 PERCENT (TO A PRESENT PCV TOTAL OF 54),
ALMOST ALL OF THIS HAS OCCURRED THROUGH EARLY TERMINATION BY
VOLUNTEERS AND NOT ON ACCOUNT OF DIRECT AFGHAN GOVT ACTION. THIS
IS NOT TO SAY THAT PEACE CORPS HAS NOT HAD ITS PROBLEMS. BUT WE ARE
HEARTENED THAT, INSTEAD OF HAVING TO CLOSE UP SHOP, PEACE CORPS HAS
RECEIVED NEW REQUESTS FOR A TOTAL OF 19 VOLUNTEERS. MOST OF THESE
(13) HAVE COME FROM THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

3. I AM AWARE THAT THE TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT BY THE
HEALTH MINISTRY ARE FOR PERSONS MORE HIGHLY SKILLED THAN PEACE
CORPS IS NORMALLY EQUIPPED TO SUPPLY. ALSO, THAT THE NUMBERS
INVOLVED ARE SMALL BY PEACE CORPS STANDARDS. I HOPE, NOTWITHSTANDING
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THESE LIMITATIONS, THAT PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS CAN BE FORTH-
COMING AND FILL THESE REQUESTS. THE AREAS WHERE PEACE CORPS HELP IS
BEING SOUGHT ARE WELL WORTHWHILE, AND IN OUR VIEW NOT OUT OF LINE
WITH PEACE CORPS PRIORITIES. EXAMPLES ARE PCVS TO WORK IN VILLAGE
WATER SUPPLY PROJECTS, IN CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL HEALTH CENTERS,
AND IN TRAINING OF MIDWIVES, NURSES, AND LAB TECHNICIANS.

4. WERE WE TO TURN DOWN THIS HEALTH MINISTRY REQUEST, I FEAR THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PEACE CORPS HERE WILL BE DAMAGED AND ITS FUTURE JEOPARDIZED. THE PEACE CORPS SERVES OUR POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN INTERESTS AND, TO MAINTAIN A PEACE CORPS PRESENCE, WE MUST TRY TO BE FORTHCOMING TO THE GOVT'S FEW REQUESTS. IF WE ARE SEEN AS BEING RESPONSIVE, THIS WILL HOPEFULLY PAVE THE WAY FOR FURTHER, EXPANDED PEACE CORPS OPPORTUNITIES. IN OUR POLICY MESSAGE OF JULY 23 (REF A), WE ASKED THAT PEACE CORPS WASHINGTON BE UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENT IF PCV LEVELS IN AFGHANISTAN FELL.

5. ON SEPT 11, PEACE CORP KABUL POUCHED TO WASHINGTON THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION SUPPORTING THE HEALTH MINISTRY'S REQUEST. I HOPE PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS AND THE DEPARTMENT WILL APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS FIRST REQUEST, AND THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY.
DUBS

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Message Attributes

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